

Promotion Board Submission

The problem of alcohol related incidents facing Soldiers in the battalion is a difficult problem to solve. It is my belief that there is no clear cut and obvious solution to this problem. I don't believe that this is a problem that will leave this Battalion or other battalions anytime in the near future. But just because there may be no clear cut solution doesn't mean that we cannot take steps to reduce the number of incidents or try and sway Soldiers in a more positive direction away from making a bad decision.

There may be those in the Army who subscribe to the theory of stricter punishments for those caught violating the Battalion's existing regulations on the use of alcohol by Soldiers. In my personal view, I do not believe this to be the answer. I have always felt that, "one can attract more bees with honey than with vinegar." Let's face it, you will always have Soldiers that drink, and those that feel it is acceptable to drink alcohol and use their POVs. This has to do with a maturity level. These few "bad apples" unfortunately give the Battalion a "black eye" for their immature actions. Another factor in alcohol related incidents has to be the operation tempo that units operate at, such as our unit, in relation to other similar units found in the Army. Certainly there is a lot more stress put on Soldiers from our Battalion than those from other units not held in such high esteem. When Soldiers are off, they want to relax and "cut loose." In order to do so, some Soldiers choose alcohol to aide the process. There is nothing wrong with this if they are of legal age and drink responsibly and in moderation. But you will always have those who do the wrong thing and choose not to listen to their peers, friends, or leaders. To combat this severe problem, I offer that the Battalion rewards those Soldiers who do the right thing. Such rewards could continue with three-day passes awarded to the Battalion for going "X" number of weeks or months without an alcohol related incident. Other rewards could be battalion sponsored events such as a picnic, a barbeque, or tickets to maybe a sporting event. There are a number of possibilities out there. All you need to do is to find a reward that the majority is willing to work for; in turn the majority of Soldiers doing the right thing will in turn coerce those few doing the wrong thing into making the right choice.

Another possible solution would be for the Battalion to look into renting out a charter bus to shuttle Soldiers around to local establishments on long weekends or holiday weekends. This could lead to less alcohol and vehicle related incidents involving Soldiers from the Battalion. In particular, this would be Soldiers residing in the barracks being shuttled to and from the barracks and back. The majority of Soldiers living in the barracks are younger Soldiers of lower enlistment. Generally, it is these Soldiers who are generally involved in the alcohol related incidents in the Battalion. By running a shuttle service, you could reduce the number of lower enlisted Soldiers on the road and possibly being involved in alcohol related incidents. Again, this is just another possible solution that could help to curb the serious problem of alcohol and vehicle related incidents in the Battalion.

In truth, we will never fully eradicate the problem of vehicle and alcohol related incidents facing the Battalion. But as I said, there is no reason that we cannot take steps to reduce the number of cases facing the Battalion. In the end true responsibility falls on the Soldiers and their immediate supervisors. Soldiers must take responsibility for their own actions. All the classes and briefings thrown at Soldiers and NCOs will only make a slight difference. I think by offering more enticing rewards for doing the right thing will eventually lead to a reduction in cases involving Soldiers, their POVs and alcohol.